



# NORTHAMPTON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

## APPROVED MINUTES

JULY 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Carolyn Misch, Chair - Patrick McCarthy, Co-Chair - Marissa Elkins - Louis Hasbrouck for Jonathan Flagg - Rachel Maiore - Richard Parasiliti - Tim Smith - Ben Weil - Angie Gregory

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### 4:00pm -

Carolyn Misch opened the meeting noting that the meeting was being recorded and started with an introduction of Josh Singer.

### Introduction of Josh Singer, Energy and Sustainability Officer -

Josh introduced himself and his background, and turned the conversation over to Carolyn.

### Public Comment Period -

- Jackie Ballance - it is great that we have an international perspective on light pollution.
- Eric Broadbent would like CAPA to look into heat pumps in the city. Incentives, assistance programs and possible funding through PVPC. Curious what that might be and what is the status.

### Review / Approve minutes of May 9th. June 13th 2023 meetings -

Minutes unanimously approved - roll call vote

### New Bill on Opt- In Communities' fossil fuel free pilot - Adele Franks -

Letter to the TUE committee distributed to Commission members. The point of this letter would be to encourage the committee to allow more than the allotted 10 communities to participate in this pilot program. We think that any community should be allowed to do this. This new stretch code would only allow the electric pathway and not the fossil fuel option.

There would be a potential to track our energy usage with this policy and compare it to communities not taking on this policy.

Carolyn - would this mean we would not be able to set our own rules about this subject?

Jackie - we could determine which exemptions we would like, or the opportunity for a builder to request an exemption.

Benjamin Weil - This is just a support letter, and we can decide whether we want to participate later

Jackie - this will be on the agenda for the TUE August meeting

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**Voting Members:** Carolyn Misch, Chair • Patrick McCarthy, Co-Chair • Marissa Elkins • Jonathan Flagg • Rachel Maiore • Richard Parasiliti • Tim Smith • Ben Weil • Angie Gregory • Eric Winkler

**Staff advisor, non voting:** Josh Singer



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Letter approved by roll call vote

#### **Western MA Solar Forum - Angie Gregory**

Angie wants everyone to know about this event, a conversation with legislators and experts in MA - they have events through the summer and september. Risks related to solar deployment like deforestation, etc. There was a technical potential of solar study released by the state as well.

#### **Lighting Ordinance Amendment - Carolyn Misch (Decision, letter of support) -**

May go out to a public hearing on Thursday. Describing the goals of this lighting ordinance, we have spent internally a lot of time discussing an amendment to the ordinance that was last updated in 2007. Technology has improved since the last iteration. There are a lot of examples of professional organizations that have ordinances that could be adopted. The amendments that we have been working on have 3 main components, simple and as enforceable as possible controlling Glare, Color, Temperature. This has been difficult as technology has changed and people have adopted LEDs. The idea was to create a physical constraint to restrict glare. A 60 degree angle ordinance isn't enforceable as it is not in effect anywhere else in the US. The standards are not available on most packaging. What will be effective and enforceable across all consumers. Larger projects with designers will be easier as they will have to comply, but how to make this work with everyone else?

The draft ordinance sent out to everyone didn't have the BUG standard included.

Questions:

Louis - How can we work with the glare situation at Pulaski park but glare in general? They just came out with a new energy code that is confusing. How do we make this ordinance simple, easy to use for electricians and homeowners?

Carolyn - The physical constraint is one of the factors, we can incorporate the BUGs chart and its levels for large scale developers and roadway engineers.

Benjamin - James had some comments on the amendment, mostly on enforcement, how would we do this?

Carolyn - for homeowners, it would be on a situational basis with citizens alerting the city through a complaint

Benjamin - why spend so much time worrying about this part of the bill if we can't really do anything about this? Can we have a policy to do some sort of education such as a sticker on items to alert them about the new lighting ordinance? I think a lot of this will come down to the communication side of this - what would the best practice be?

Louis - I think it will be the effectiveness of the communications, who can we get into contact with? Electricians, contractors? I don't think it will reach a lot of people.

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There is a potential to list “approved fixtures” with frosted lenses or something similar.

Carolyn - I think the most important thing enforcement wise will be commercial and large scale development which will be easier to enforce as they will be using permits. Maybe there is a better way to work with the middle to low tier users.

Nancy- thanks James for putting forth the comments. I think Northampton is looked to as a model community and this is a great way to continue this record.

Opened to Public -

James - stressed the importance of a ordinance that is simple to understand, and cites the Flagstaff AZ example. Since none of the manufacturers list a degree limit spec, how do we enforce it?

Benjamin - LUX and light candles are really what we care about, and what aggravates this is height of the light

Lilly Lombard - higher light poles and brighter lights are becoming more common. Would rather have a better shield than a 90 degree. Does anyone know where the trend is going in regard to these fixtures?

Louis - lower prices and better lighting is becoming more common industry wide

James - light pollution is getting worse every year, but so is the dark sky movement. We are testifying at the state about this.

James - could we discuss with one of the planners or light enforcement officers from a city that has done this work?

#### **Councilor Updates (NESC administrative) -**

No Councilor updates at this time

Louis - building code postponed until 2024. Going along with energy code as it is.

#### **Committee Adjourned at 5:34pm**

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